

WILLIAMSTOWN



PRIMARY SCHOOL

Learning Program
Grade 3/4

Introduction

Welcome to Grade 3/4 at Williamstown Primary School. The aim of this booklet is to give you an insight into the type of learning that is happening in your child's classroom on a daily basis.

Team Approach

The 3/4 teaching team in 2017 is:

- Matt Eason-Jones (3/4E)
- Michelle Jordan (3/4J)
- Molly Hedditch / Johanne Ford (3/4H)
- Joel Kitchen (3/4K)
- Anna Swan – Team Leader (3/4S)
- Emil DeVries (3/4T)

Lessons in 3/4 are planned together with each teacher adding his or her experiences and knowledge to put together a curriculum that is differentiated, engaging and inclusive of all students and their various learning styles. We work hard to ensure that students are all taught the same curriculum, with each individual teacher adding his or own personal touch.

We meet on a weekly basis to discuss the needs, strengths and areas for improvement of our students. We share ideas, collaborate the various strategies used to teach particular units and review our teaching practices. Most importantly, we ensure that each classroom is well supported by all team members.

Learning To Learn, Learning To Be

There are two types of learning that take place in the classroom. The first is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), in which students are introduced to concepts that are the next step in their learning. The second is called the Zone of Actual Development (ZAD), in which students practise the knowledge or skills they have learnt, in order to embed that learning in their minds until it can be recalled automatically. Both types of learning are equally important.

When learning, students in 3/4 are being asked to look for the challenge that is not too easy and not too hard, but just right for them. In this way, they can locate their ZPD for themselves and manage their own learning.

We are encouraging the development of a Growth Mindset in the classroom. Educational research has shown that students who have a Growth Mindset are more successful learners. Growth Mindset is the attitude that, it's better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all. It's also called the Not Yet movement. In other words, you haven't failed; you just haven't got it yet.

We are also encouraging the production of Five Star Work when completing work tasks. You should find examples of this on the wall in your child's classroom.

Independent Learning & Leadership

One of the main aims of the 3/4 program is to help students become more independent learners. Thus, students in Grade 3 are introduced to using their own lockers, managing stationary in a personal pencil case and are expected to take responsibility for their iPads. They are also exposed to skills and strategies that allow them to start thinking more critically. For Grade 4s, it is about consolidating the previous year's efforts towards becoming an independent learner, and developing leadership skills in readiness for the move to Grade 5/6 and the Middle Years program.

Literacy

English is comprised of many different elements – reading, writing, spelling, and speaking & listening - all of which are intertwined. Generally speaking, students do a two-hour block of literacy every morning. Each class operates a similar program, with teachers modifying for the particular needs of their grade.

Reading

Reading lessons consist of a warm-up activity followed by a Whole Class Focus (WCF). Students then split into groups to complete a set literacy activity. To conclude the lesson students come back together to reflect and share.

Reading activities include: independent reading, comprehension activities, spelling tasks, reading journal reflections and guided reading with the teacher. Activities are differentiated according to student need.

Writing

In 3/4, students focus on five main text types: Recount, Narrative, Persuasive, Informative and Poetry.

This year we continue to use two writing programs. The first, which assists students with the 'mechanics' of writing, is called VCOP. This stands for vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation. The other writing program, which aims to develop structural skills, such as story plotting, is called Seven Steps to Writing Success.

A typical writing lesson involves a warm up activity followed by our WCF. From here students work independently, focusing on the lesson's learning intention. To conclude the lesson students come back together to share and reflect.

Spelling

Each week we focus on a different aspect of spelling. Homework spelling words reflect this focus and are differentiated to suit your child's needs. They are specifically selected to build automatic recall ability (ZAD). Thus, it is very important that your child practises the words they have been given by their teacher. Students are tested on their knowledge of the spelling words on Fridays.

Speaking and Listening

Students in 3/4 are encouraged to share their thoughts and opinions on a regular basis. They speak in front of the class during class presentations, during share and reflection time and during open class discussions. They are also expected to listen to their peers, as well as their teachers.

Numeracy

During Numeracy lessons we cover three strands of mathematical knowledge: Number & Algebra, Measurement & Geometry and Statistics & Probability. A typical lesson consists of a warm up game/activity followed by a 15-minute WCF. Students then break into groups to complete an activity based on the learning intention. Each activity is differentiated to suit each group's needs. To conclude the lesson students will share/reflect on their learning.

A major focus in 3/4 is the learning of timetables and basic number facts between 1-20 e.g. $6+7=13$. Being able to quickly recall these number facts is absolutely critical in order for students to be able to compute higher order equations.

Integrated Studies

A different Integrated Studies unit is taught each term. This year the topics are: Learning To Learn Learning To Be, Spinning in Space (Science), The First Australians (History), Change Detectives (Science) and Australia and the World (Geography). Each topic is taught explicitly 2-3 times a week, as well as integrated into other areas of the curriculum through various readings, discussions, activities and presentations. To conclude each unit, students complete an inquiry-based task/project where they investigate their own wonderings and questions.

Child Wise

All 3/4 students will take part in a personal safety program developed by Child Wise, Australia's leading child abuse prevention organisation. These sessions are designed to build students' resilience and confidence, in order for them to problem solve and identify strategies that prevent harm and abuse. There will be three main ideas as a focus each term, and the 3/4 students will be involved in activities and discussions within the classroom facilitated by their classroom teacher. For more information, please visit www.childwise.org.au.

Digital Learning Technologies

In 3/4, the BYOiD program has become an integral tool in enhancing the curriculum and providing the students with varied, differentiated and engaging learning opportunities. This includes the use of the internet and apps such as Edmodo, Mathletics, Literacy Planet, Popplet and Explain Everything to demonstrate learning, inquire about a new topic, share thoughts and ideas, as well as develop new skills and strategies when problem solving.

Language Other Than English L.O.T.E

This year, Italian will not be taught as a specialist learning subject; however, it will continue to feature in our classrooms. Students will be involved in a range of activities, which will promote the everyday basics of the language, using strategies such as songs, games and iPad apps. As a whole staff, we aim to review our provision of languages this year so that the 2018 year commences with a renewed program ready to go.

Homework and School Diary

This year, homework will be completed in a workbook, which will be sent home in a plastic pocket. It will generally be sent home on a Monday and expected back on Friday of the same week. Students will be expected to practise their 10 spelling words and the nominated times table, complete a brainteaser and read for 20 minutes a night. Towards the end of each term students will also be asked to complete a project linked to the Integrated topic.

The 3/4 students will continue to have their own school diary, which will primarily be used as an information tool. It is hoped that students can take notice of important dates and enter in special information to become more responsible for their personal organisation.

Camp

This year, the 3/4 students will be heading off for two nights at Camp Marysville from Wednesday 25th October to Friday 27th October. All 3/4 classes will attend this camp together to spend quality time in the great outdoors. It will be a balanced experience, with activities ranging from cooking with produce grown on site, bush walks and drumming, to more adventurous activities such as climbing and canoeing. You can visit <http://www.campmarysville.org.au> for more information.

Conclusion

If you have any further questions about the curriculum, please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher for more information.